***Press* Release**

The Meteorological Office

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Missing Millennium weather web site launched by The Met. Office

In the UK, weather forecasting and the aviation industry have both passed a vigorous testing programme to ensure there will be no problems associated with the so-called 'Millennium Bug'. However, both activities rely heavily on overseas weather information, the availability of which may be affected by communication problems caused by the Millennium Bug outside the UK.

Both National Air Traffic Services (NATS) and The Met. Office are working closely together to minimise disruption to the aviation industry caused by any loss of overseas weather data. One initiative in this area is the development of The Met. Office's Year 2000 Aviation Helpdesk.

If The Met. Office identify a breakdown in normal communication lines for foreign weather data, they will contact the Ministry of Defence and a number of international airlines who have pledged their support for the helpdesk. These airlines and the MoD will attempt to source the missing data using other communications methods such as high-frequency (HF) radio or mobile telephone. Other airline operators will then be able to access the missing information on a dedicated web site which will operate between 31 December 1999 and 4 January 2000.

David Underwood, Head of Civil Aviation Services at The Met. Office, said: "Whilst cast-iron guarantees are not possible in regard to data availability, The Met. Office is certain that working closely with NATS and the airlines is the best way of minimising the impact of the Millennium Bug. National Air Traffic Services is pleased to support this Met. Office initiative", said Brandon Chapman, Head of NATS Operational Strategy and Performance. "We will be working with The Met. Office to provide the best possible service to our customers."

Notes

1.The web site does not guarantee to provide all missing overseas aviation information.

2. The web site address will be www.met-office.gov.uk/reportsav

3. National Air Traffic Services (NATS) is a major customer of The Met. Office and, under delegation from the Civil Aviation Authority, acts as the UK Met. Authority.

4. Among the civil airlines supporting this initiative are Air2000, Airtours, British Airways, British Midland, European Aviation Air Charter, KLM uk, and Virgin.

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